

# **What You Need to Know About SIDS.....**

## **Information for Medical Examiners/Coroners**

### **What is SIDS?**

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) or “crib death” is the sudden death of an infant under 1 year of age which remains unexplained after a thorough case investigation, including performance of a complete autopsy, examination of the death scene, and review of the clinical history. (Willinger et al., 1991)

The baby dies quickly, without warning, and usually during sleep. SIDS is sometimes called “crib death”, but cribs do not cause SIDS.

SIDS is a major cause of death of babies 1 month to 1 year of age.

### **What are some important facts to know about SIDS?**

SIDS is **not** caused by child abuse.

Babies do **not** have to be sick to die from SIDS.

SIDS is **not** caused by “baby shots”.

SIDS is **not** passed from one baby to another.

SIDS is **not** the cause of every unexpected infant death.

SIDS is **not** preventable, but there are ways to lower the risk.

### **What is SUDI?**

Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) is the death of an infant (0-2 years of age) due to natural or unnatural cause not attributable to a known medical condition prior to death.

### **What causes SUDI?**

Unintentional suffocation

Undetermined-bed-sharing

Metabolic or previously undetected condition which can be attributed to the fatal pathway

Child Maltreatment/Abuse/Neglect

### **Responsibility of the Medical Examiner in an Assumed SIDS Death**

To refer the death to the designated pathologist to perform an autopsy; To forward the report of findings to the Mississippi Department of Health (SIDS Program)

Section 41-61-65(1), Mississippi Code of 1972

To perform a death investigation in accordance with child death investigation protocol; To report the results of the death investigation within 72 hours of the conclusion of the death investigation

Section 41-61-63(2)(e), Mississippi Code of 1972

Source: National SIDS/Infant Death Program Support Center (NSIDRC)

**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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